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DE RUEHJA #3145/01 3170948
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7032
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4480
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1547
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1442
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3547
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2000
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0441
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 003145

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, H
NSC FOR EPHU
H FOR DRICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: INDONESIA'S NATIONAL LEGISLATURE WORKS TO
STRENGTHEN U.S. CAUCUS

REF: A. JAKARTA 2737

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 1930
[1](#)C. JAKARTA 1919

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) has moved quickly in recent months to invigorate its U.S. Caucus. Membership in the Caucus has swollen to over 50 representatives and contains some of the most influential members of the DPR, including the Speaker. Mission has supported the development of the Caucus with increased dialogue and coordination. The Caucus hopes to engage the U.S. Congress directly. The DPR is increasingly asserting itself in Indonesia's nascent democracy and Mission has ratcheted up its outreach with the DPR accordingly. A letter from the Caucus to select members of the U.S. Congress highlighting defense cooperation issues is contained in paragraph 6. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) CAUCUS ON THE MARCH: The 50-plus member Caucus, or informal working group, is one of only a handful of such organizations within the DPR and contains roughly ten percent of the members in the DPR. (Note: There are also caucuses on Iran, Taiwan, and Burma. Only the Burma Caucus--which contains many members interested in human rights--appears to be very active.) The U.S. Caucus was established in August 2005 but floundered with little leadership or energy. Beginning with the July 2007 visit of CODEL Payne (Ref B), this dynamic quickly changed. Well-regarded parliamentarian Marzuki Darusman took the reins of the organization, developed an ambitious agenda for the group, and its membership ranks promptly doubled, including the addition of Speaker Laksono.

[1](#)3. (C) MOVERS AND SHAKERS: DPR Speaker Laksono was only the most high profile addition to a caucus which includes parliamentarians from across the party spectrum. Among the many other notable members, Defense and Foreign Policy Committee Chair Theo Sambuaga and Inter-Parliamentary

Committee Chair Abdillah Toha stand out. Mission has worked closely with the Caucus as it seeks to expand its prerogatives to include trade issues, student exchanges, and outreach to the U.S. Congress. The Ambassador will host a working dinner for the group November 29 and--based on Mission's recent off-site--we have developed an ad hoc committee to expand Mission ties with the DPR.

¶4. (C) LOOKING TO THE HILL: One of the Caucus' overarching goals is to buttress member-to-member communications between the DPR and the Hill, particularly with the 23-member Indonesia Caucus in the U.S. Congress. Members of the DPR Caucus believe that direct dialogue between the DPR and the Hill--including via visits and exchanges by members and staff--will significantly enhance the overall strength of the bilateral relationship and eliminate misunderstandings on key issues. One example is the matter of defense cooperation. The Caucus has decided to address this issue directly with a letter to select members of the U.S. Congress with the hope that it will lead to greater dialogue. The letter is contained in Para 6.

¶5. (C) DPR FINDING ITS STRIDE: Less than ten years after Suharto's fall, the DPR is increasingly beginning to assert itself in Indonesia's nascent democracy. Though riddled with money politics and still working to define its precise role vis-a-vis the executive branch, Indonesia's legislature bears no resemblance to its rubber stamping Suharto-era predecessor. From a U.S. foreign policy standpoint, the DPR's newfound relevance has cut both ways, most notably by playing a useful role on Burma (Ref A) and an unhelpful one on Iran (Ref C). Regardless of its foreign policy predilections, the DPR is growing into a force to be reckoned with and Mission has ratcheted up its outreach with the DPR accordingly.

¶6. (U) Begin letter from the DPR's U.S. Caucus to select U.S.

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Senators and Representatives:

The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Frank Wolf
The Honorable Judd Gregg

Dear Chairpersons and Ranking Minority:

As members of the U.S. Caucus of the democratically elected Indonesian National Parliament (DPR), we wish to express our concern over language in the FY 2008 Foreign Operations Appropriation Bills that conditions U.S. security assistance to Indonesia.

The U.S. Congress is free to express its views on human rights issues throughout the world, and as a democratic and open society we welcome any country, including the U.S. to examine the development of civil society in Indonesia. However, we believe that the concerns outlined in the appropriations bills are not reflective of the great strides that the Indonesian people and successive freely elected governments have achieved as we continue our efforts at institutionalizing democratic rule.

We are deeply concerned that instead of seeking to strengthen the case of human rights in Indonesia, the legislation will reinforce the hand of those who oppose reform, seek to weaken the bonds of friendship between our two countries and stoke anti-American sentiment. Especially disappointing, and inflammatory, are the provisions requiring reports from the Government of Indonesia on certain human rights matters. We believe this oversteps the bounds of our sovereignty.

We members of the U. S. Caucus of the Indonesian National Parliament have deep affection and admiration for the United States. Our shared democratic values of freedom, individual

rights, and the rule of law serve as the foundation for strengthening the ties that can serve to bind our two countries closer together. We welcome a dialogue on human rights and a frank and honest discussion of this issue. We especially want to encourage you to visit our country. This will give you an opportunity to meet with our human rights organizations, legislators, military officers, judges, prosecutors, and our free press to see for yourselves the challenges we face. We believe you will come away with a greater understanding of the progress that has been made and how we are working to protect the rights of all Indonesians and foster reconciliation in our country.

We appreciate the generous assistance the American people have provided through your committees-especially in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami.

We hope that you will give careful consideration to the suggestions advanced in this letter, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to broaden and strengthen our social, academic, economic and political ties.

Sincerely

C.C.
The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Senator Joseph R. Biden
Senator Richard G. Lugar
Rep. Tom Lantos
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS ON INDONESIA:

Rep. Dan Burton (Chairman)
Rep. Robert Wexler (Chairman)
Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Rep. Adam Schiff
Rep. Alcee Hastings
Rep. Joseph Pitts
Rep. Jim McDermott
Rep. Howard Berman

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Rep. Gregory Meeks
Rep. Mike Honda
Rep. Anthony Weiner
Rep. Brad Sherman
Rep. Tom Lantos
Rep. Richard Baker
Rep. William Jefferson
Rep. Joe Wilson
Rep. Donna Christensen
Rep. K. Michael Conaway
Rep. Joe Crowley
Rep. Connie Mack
Rep. Ben Chandler
Senator. Kay Bailey Hutchison ER-TX)
Senator. Barrack Obama (D-IL)

END LETTER.
HUME